

THE WASHINGTON HERALD

DRAMATIC DEPARTMENT.
William Osborn, Editor

THE WEEK'S PROGRAMME.

The Academy—"St. Elmo."
The Columbia—"A Gentleman from Mississippi."
The National—"Little Nemo."
The Belasco—Andrew Mack in "A Prince of Bohemia."
Chase—"Polite Vaudeville."
The Casino—Continous Vaudeville.
The Gayety—Burlesque.
The Lyceum—Burlesque.

A good many years ago a young dramatic writer had occasion to write a criticism of Miss Annie Russell, and in his review he referred to her "purring" manner. The charming lady, who is now one of the leading lights of the New Theater, made a strenuous objection to such a designation of her methods. Perhaps, if the young writer had been taken, but looking back over the years, there is somehow a feeling that Miss Russell was justified in her objections.

Similarly, John Drew must write under the word "polished," which we encounter nowadays, even in the advance notices. It is understood always that a gentleman has polish, and at best it is but a vulgar term. Were it not that John Drew never emerges into print, perhaps, we should have on record just such an objection as that registered by Miss Russell.

Mr. Drew's distinguishing characteristic is personality. A lady who attended a performance of "Inconstant George," and a lady who, by-the-way, is an admirer of John Drew, and has the habit of seeing all the plays in which he appears, said that she could not reconcile the actor with the youthful part—that he seemed too old. Setting aside the criticism as applicable to a great many of the leading lights of the stage, past the heyday of youth, who are portraying young characters, there is just one thing to be said as a retort to the shaft aimed at Mr. Drew in this particular case.

The majority of his admirers admit that he does not assume a character. His parts are selected with such care that Mr. Drew himself seems to be the individual concerned in the play's action. This may be another way of saying that he is always the same, and it may be true, but then one always has the pleasurable sensation of seeming to watch John Drew, not a fictional character. To the theatergoer who really appreciates Drew that is sufficient. His personality is many-sided, but, in the accepted meaning of the word, he is not versatile. This is why he is such a powerful personality. To those to whom delicacy and refinement are acceptable on the stage, to whom comedy is wit and neatly-turned epigram, and to whom acting is a subtle delineation of real human nature, John Drew will always appeal. Heroes and exaggerated sentiments are not at all in his line. No one understands this better than he, and when cast as "Richard Carvel" he could hardly keep his face straight, so huge was the joke.

A sketch of Willard Holcomb appears elsewhere in these columns to-day. Mr. Holcomb served for several years as a dramatic critic in Washington, and his writings on matters pertaining to the theater were held in high esteem. He was one of the pioneers of that coterie of Washington dramatic writers who now claim New York as their home. Of these the best known were Fred F. Schreder, Will A. Page, Hector Fuller, Channing Pollock, and J. H. Holcomb. The two last named have had conspicuous successes as playwrights, and Washington has every reason to be proud of their achievements. Mr. Holcomb's play, "St. Elmo," has enjoyed an unusual prominence, and the chorus of critical judgment has been almost unanimously in praise of the play.

It is curious to note the interest engendered by plays dealing by-gone periods of American life. Irrespective of the workmanship, the story, if tolerably told, and the characters, if fairly well drawn, seem to rivet the attention at once. This is caused by the natural tendency of the human mind toward the romantic and picturesque, two qualities which have disappeared from our national life. No doubt these gamblers, gentlemen and otherwise, these road agents, these backwoodsmen, and these cowboys, all have their counterparts in the present system, but there was something present in the older times which is absent in this.

The time and place chosen by Booth Tarkington for the background of a number of his stories was one of the most remarkable in our annals. The half foreign city of New Orleans, with its Creoles, levees, and semi-medieval customs; the Mississippi, with its steamboat traffic, patronized by the cotton planter, and preyed upon by the card sharp; the raffish of adventurers who journeyed to and fro amid these scenes, all afford material for the romanticist. New Orleans was the commercial and social metropolis of the Southwest, and wherever we find the gentleman gambler, or by whatever story-teller he is depicted, we invariably hear some reference to, or some reminiscence of, the old life in New Orleans. Although the character has often before been presented by American writers, Bret Harte being the first and most successful, there is still plenty of material left for a writer like Tarkington, who is skilful in the creation of atmospheric conditions, the relation of episodes, and the delineation of character, being, in fact, a capital story-teller.

In "Cameo Kirby" he has focused his arts upon a profile subject, and the vehicle, as presented by Dustin Farnum and his excellent company, makes an evening of enjoyment and semi-historical interest. This sort of play seems to have more blood and bone than the modern sociological or economic wrangle.

What promises to be the dramatic event of the season will occur in the coming engagement of the New Theater Company. This famous organization will be seen here in three or four of the most prominent successes of their inaugural season in New York. This tour was only decided upon after continual and urgent requests from all over the country for an opportunity to witness this notable company of players and one of the first of the few larger cities to be visited in Washington. In addition to the actual company now engaged at the New Theater, the original stage settings will be carried for each production to be presented on tour.

Whatever artistic merit "Three Weeks" may have possessed as a book were lost in its transformation into a drama. The play, as presented here last week, was not even interesting. It was weak and incoherent, miserably acted, and palpably devised to attract the curious. For commercial purposes, the title was sufficient, but that was all that remained of the exotic romance which caused such widespread comment. It was unbelievable that such trash could be the author's own dramatization. She who wrote "The

ENTERTAINERS WHO WILL APPEAR IN LOCAL PLAYHOUSES THIS WEEK.



MARTIN L. ALSOP IN "ST. ELMO" AT NEW ACADEMY



JAMES EHRLICH AND MAUD CAMPBELL IN "LITTLE NEMO" AT NEW NATIONAL



WILLARD HOLCOMB.

Washington Playwright and His Latest Play, "St. Elmo."

When Augustus Thomas in "The Harvest Moon" named the young dramatist "Mr. Holcomb" he paid a graceful compliment to a well-known Washington playwright and possibly a debt of gratitude for a borrowed idea. Certainly the rehearsal scene in the third act of his mental suggestion study bore a marked resemblance to "Her Last Rehearsal," the one-act play by Willard Holcomb, familiar to local theatergoers since May 27, 1896, when it had its first production on any stage at Albaugh's Grand Opera House, now Chase's, at a benefit performance for the Legion of Loyal Women. This clever and then entirely novel play scored such an instant success that it was presented for two weeks by the original summer stock company at the National Theater, with Charles Mackay as Romeo, Mary Sanders as Juliet, and William Hoag, a Washington actor, originating the role of the Stage Manager, which position he has held with David Warfield ever since the latter became a star under David Belasco.

This was the first of the so-called "bare-stage" sketches, and although there have been countless variations and imitations, "Her Last Rehearsal" remains the pioneer. Mr. Holcomb estimates that fully a dozen vaudevillians are earning their living with readily recognizable variations of his original idea, but as he has drawn royalty on it for nearly fourteen years, it is not worth worrying about these flea bites.

Even Sam Bernard had a rehearsal scene in "The Girl and the Wizard," but although he used much of the same stage business made familiar here by Messrs. Boag, Bond, McCord and their numerous followers, there was no such graceful acknowledgment of the original authorship as that suggested, at least, by Mr. Thomas, who has suffered much himself from that "sincerest form of flattery" so prevalent in the theatrical world.

Immediately after the phenomenal success of Mr. Holcomb's original stage version of "St. Elmo," a dozen imitations and managers discovered the dramatic possibilities of Augustus Evans Wilson's old novel, which had laid on the library shelves for forty years, totally neglected by the book-play makers. Messrs. Glaser and Holcomb had been honest enough to purchase all dramatic rights from Mrs. Wilson before her demise, and won five injunctions against infringers; but persistent "pirates," aided and abetted, it is said, by sundry managers who should be above such business, finally found a flaw in the copyright. On the strength of one adverse decision a dozen imitations of "St. Elmo" were produced, principally by the cheap stocks and one-night stands. For Vaughan Glaser had covered the country from coast to coast, and five companies playing Mr. Holcomb's version with uniform success from New York to San Francisco left only small pickings for "pirates." Their original Southern company, which comes to the Academy of Music this week, has triumphed on merit over theatrical guffballs from Maryland to Missouri, and is prepared to show Washington theatergoers "the only authorized dramatization of 'St. Elmo.'"

MUSIC OF "LITTLE NEMO."

Victor Herbert has never written any more tuneful or entrancing music than that which he is responsible for in "Little Nemo." There are seventy-five choruses in "Little Nemo," and they can sing there. There are in the male contingent twelve trained quartets perfectly drilled for the great amount of intricate singing that they do. The prima donna, Miss Natalie Alte, the little princess, Miss Almee Ehrlich; the Candy Kid, Miss Maud Campbell, and the twenty other principals have, of course, voices of remarkable quality and wonderful technique, as the roles are all of a difficult nature and require great ability.

In the two patriotic numbers of "Little Nemo," which are "Give Us a Fleet" and "The Liberty Bell," the volume produced is most striking produced on the stage.

THIS WEEK'S PLAYBILLS

New National—"Little Nemo."

On Monday night Klaw & Erlanger's superb production, "Little Nemo," will begin an engagement of a week at the New National Theater.

The play is based on Winsor McKay's cartoons in the New York Herald, and Victor Herbert, the composer, and Harry B. Smith, the librettist, have evolved the most satisfactory and amusing spectacle this country has produced in years.

From beginning to end "Little Nemo" is described as a dream of exquisite beauty and coloring. In its eleven scenes a thousand costumes are worn by its great company of over 150 people, most of whom are attractive young women. Most striking, perhaps of its many notable scenes are those depicting the Land of St. Valentine with its myriad living valentines; the Palace of Patriotism, with its blazing fireworks display ingeniously contrived with electricity alone; the elaborate scene which shows a summer park in operation, with merry-go-rounds, roller-skaters, loop-the-loops, etc., and the deck of one of Uncle Sam's battle ships with its swarms of sailors. These scenes, and there are others nearly as notable, and surprising instances of the advancement made in stagecraft in the last few years, and they pass from one to another with a smoothness and swiftness that is little short of marvelous.

In the great company are Joseph Cawthorn, Harry Kelly, H. Clay Barney, Master Gabriel, Dave Abrams, Collins, and Hart, W. W. Black, Almee Ehrlich, Natalie Alte, Madelyn Marshall, Queenie Vassar, Maude Campbell, and Mildred Manning. A force of over seventy-five expert stage mechanics are required to handle the gigantic production.

The Columbia—"A Gentleman from Mississippi."

Thomas A. Wise, the heavy-weight comedian whom players of two generations remember for his deliciously funny performances in musical comedy and farce roles, is responsible for the story of "A Gentleman from Mississippi," which begins a week's engagement at the Columbia Theater to-morrow night. In the writing of the play "Tom" Wise called in the services of Harrison Rhodes, novelist, and the result has kept them both busy ever since counting the royalties which have been pouring in for almost two years from five companies which have been presenting the comedy in various parts of the country. In the original company, which appeared in New York for more than a year in New York, four months in Boston, and three months in Philadelphia, Mr. Wise plays the title role, and Douglas Fairbanks appears as a young Washington newspaper correspondent. "A Gentleman from Mississippi" is American from start to finish, and although it has a moral, it tells it between laughs.

Chase—"Billy B. Van."

Busby Billy B. Van this week will keep fun stirring at every performance at Chase's, where he will hold forth with the charming assistance of the pretty and talented Beaumont sisters. Mr. Van has been measured and fitted by Herbert Hall Winslow to the most successful musical comedy with which he has ever essayed the capture of polite vaudeville. It is called "Props," and its hero is one of those ubiquitous individuals who rule the region back of footlights. It is the sort of character which the ebullient Billy fairly revels in and he is said to race through his merry action with all that hurry-up-and-be-happy method typical of him.

The extra added attraction, Grigolatti's gorgeous Aerial Ballet, is the identical foreign novelty which sprang into fame at the Berlin Wintergarden. It is led by Mile. Floretta, the celebrated German premiere aerialist, accompanied by a corps of pretty flying corpees. James F. Macdonald will be a conspicuous comic addition, and his songs and stories are of the 1910 vintage. The Sully Family are said to be funny in "The Sult Case," which they will present. Another novel number will be that of Oscar Lorraine, the violin virtuoso, Mareena, Nevano, and Mareena will present a laughable foreign specialty. De Lisle will amusingly manipulate hats and clubs. "The Paris Fhood," by the vitagraph, will become a principal attraction, owing to public interest in the French capital's catastrophe and also because of the exceptionally realistic and artistic character of the films which will be exhibited.

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The Belasco—Andrew Mack in "The Prince of Bohemia."

The attraction this week at the Belasco Theater will be Low Fields' offering of Andrew Mack in the Fields latest and liveliest musical play, "The Prince of Bohemia." This musical play, which comes direct from the Hackett Theater, New York, is the work of J. Hartley Manser, with music by A. Bladwin Sloane, and lyrics by E. Ray Goetz. The piece was staged by Ned Wayburn, who is unequalled for his original and delightful arranging of chorus ensemble numbers, which are always a feature of any production identified with Mr. Wayburn. "The Prince of Bohemia" is a satire on the proclivity of American parents to marry their daughters to titled foreigners. Mr. Mack's impersonation of the jolly, rollicking young American, Dick Conners, is said to be delightful, and he has several songs which are rendered in his limelight manner, notably the one entitled "Go 'Way, Mistah Moon," which all New York is humming and whistling. The next important member of the large cast is Miss Christie Macdonald, who, petite and charming, has a role which displays her winsome personality, excellent acting, and musical ability. Other notable in the cast are W. T. Carleton, E. H. Kelly, Charles F. McCarthy, Henry Norman, Mary Forrest, George Lawrence, Mildred Manning, and Maude Brown.

The Academy—"St. Elmo."

No novel since "Uncle Tom's Cabin" has been perennially more popular wherever the English language is spoken than "St. Elmo," by Augustus J. Evans Wilson, who was the "Harriet Beecher Stowe" of the South. In her greatest novel Mrs. Wilson wisely avoided all topics which might excite sectional differences, and confined herself to a charming and powerful romance of the old South in the days when dueling was in vogue. The main theme of the story is the regeneration of St. Elmo Murray, a cynical young scion of the aristocracy who has "killed his man." Through the influence of Edna Earl, a proud and high-minded little mountain girl, who by sheer strength of will and intellect, rises to heights undreamed of under the old regime. It is a contrast between the old and new South, and because Mrs. Evans Wilson so accurately forecasted the outcome of events after the war, no less than her powerful story of human interest, which is always fresh and vital, her story has survived.

This production with complete scenery, painted from original photographs of the location at the foot of Lookout Mountain, duplicate furniture and costumes of the period, will be the attraction at the Academy all next week with the usual Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday matinees.

The Casino—Continous Vaudeville.

Heading the bill at the Casino this week will be Mr. and Mrs. Harry Thorne, two of the most favorably known artists in vaudeville, who have just closed an engagement at the American Music Hall in New York City, where they were the biggest kind of a hit. They will be seen at the Casino next week in their screaming one-act farce comedy, "An Uptown Flat." Of interest and importance also is the special engagement of Dellizze and Messenger, a pair of very versatile entertainers of first rank. Miss Dora Dellizze has a repertoire of character impersonations of such well-known artists as Anna Held, Eva Tanguay, Elsie Janis, and many others. Mr. Messenger is a pianologist of exceptional ability, and offers a feature of the programme of no small merit. Browne, Scamans and Browne appear in a novel and refined singing and dancing act, doing some clever stunts in the dancing line on



CARL POHLIG, Leader of the Philadelphia Orchestra.



CHRISTIE MACDONALD IN "PRINCE OF BOHEMIA" AT BELASCO THEATRE.

roller skates. A recognized favorite is Miss Leslie Thurston, queen of the xylophone, whose renditions of the best musical selections on this instrument have caused instrumentalists to look upon the xylophone with enhanced favor. An act of the thrilling class will be offered by Cadieux, the Parisian bounding wire artist. Adams and Mack, with an act of magic in burlesque, afford much amusement and laughter. Bailey and Fickett do an acrobatic and comedy barrel jumping act that will please. Max and Mex, the clown and the mule, is a comedy turn that will greatly amuse the little folks, and the big ones, too. The standard of the picture plays seen at the Casino is now well recognized, and the week's bill will be completed with a selection of the best productions.

The Gayety—"Follies of New York and Paris."

"Follies of New York and Paris," headed by Charles Howard, will be the Gayety Theater attraction this week. The offering is a potpourri of fun, singing, and dancing. Howard shoulders the responsibility of making the audience laugh on an average of about every three seconds. The vehicle, "Night Life in Two Gay Cities," offers him all the opportunities for continuous funmaking. He is supported by some clever comedians, and a chorus of people who can handle the meriment and difficult music in a vivacious way. Among the women Ida Emerson, Corinne La Monde, and Jennie Austin are conspicuous. Among the feature acts is the rarely beautiful and graceful dancing specialty of the "Eight English Roses."

The Lyceum—"Tiger Lilies."

An entertainment described as a direct departure from anything previously presented at the New Lyceum Theater is pronounced for this week. The offering will be the greater "Tiger Lilies" in a thoroughly original and up-to-date musical review entitled "A Night With the Burlesque Stars."

The company contains the names of some clever comedians, while the female contingent can boast of more charms and ability than any of the similar troupes. The leading comedians are Billy Spencer, the original "Grogan," and Sam Mann, who is ably supported in the funmaking by Mae E. Hadley, the Three Musketeers, Lee Sisters, Charles E. Reded, Al Patterson, Marty S. Ward, Margaret Sheridan, and the Torleys.

Mrs. Fiske has finished with "Salvation Nell," and will begin rehearsals at once of her new plays in which she will later be seen in New York and the principal cities.

Please Make a Note of-613 14th Street.

That's my new store—between F and G Streets. I shall be ready to open next Tuesday, March 1. You're going to find it a modern store—with everything new—stocks as well as equipments. I am adding to the Auerbach service a line of the highest grade of Men's Clothing—on a par with Auerbach Haberdashery and Auerbach Hats.

THE AVENUE STORE AND F ST. STORE WILL BE CLOSED.

Joseph Auerbach,

613 Fourteenth St. Men's Wardroby.

LOCAL STAGE NOTES.

The first performance of Miss Viola Allen in "The White Sister" at the Belasco Theater, Monday, April 4, will be for the benefit of the Sisters of Mercy, who are endeavoring to raise the debt on St. Catherine's, a residence for self-supporting women. Miss Allen is achieving great success in "The White Sister."

Willard Holcomb, author of "St. Elmo," spent last evening at the Midway as the guest of E. A. Mulliken, press agent of the Midway Company.

"Checkers," Henry M. Blossom's popular racing comedy, will be one of the March attractions at the Academy.

Sir Charles Wyndham, in "The Mollusc," will follow Genes in "The Silver Star" at the New National.

Adeline Genes did not reach her present pinnacle as the greatest of the world's dancers without the hardest of work. Even now she has to devote hours every day to practice.

Winsor McKay, who drew the cartoons upon which "Little Nemo" is based, says that his son is the original of his conception of Nemo, and that the earliest of the pictures were made to please the boy.

It is understood that Low Fields has placed Miss Christie Macdonald under a long-term contract, and next year, it is promised, the dainty prima donna will be a star on her own account.

In the cast supporting Andrew Mack in "The Prince of Bohemia" will be the well-known comic opera comedian W. T. Carleton, who, not many years back, toured the country with his own organization.

Peter, the educated chimpanzee, will appear at Chase's for the second time this season, week of March 14, and hundreds of mail orders for seats have already been received. This monkey seems to be the most popular of all "stage celebrities."

One of the most important weeks of Chase's season will be when Denman Thompson, creator of "Joshua Whitcomb," supported by a splendid company, will be the star attraction.

Among the good things coming to Chase's may be mentioned "Dinklespiel's Christmas," presented by Joseph Hart, of which George V. Hobart, is the author. At the last Lamb's Club Gambol this comedy number was the "piece de resistance."

Al Jolson, late principal funmaker with Dockstader's Minstrels, and Harry Williams and Egbert Van Alstyne, the popular song writers, will be seen soon at Chase's.

The "Passion Play" will be presented at the Virginia Theater to-day with special music. There will be a matinee at 2 p. m.

Not to be outdone by the action of the United States Senate in accepting Senator Gordon's invitation to attend the performance of "The Gentleman from Mississippi," practically the entire press gallery at the Capitol have reserved seats for the same performance.

From present indications the benefit for the Actors' Fund that is being arranged by the local theatrical managers, with the co-operation of Daniel Frohman, Abe Erlinger, and many of the prominent producers in the country, will be one of the biggest events ever attempted in this city.

The Ellery Band, the organization that won for Channing Ellery, its organizer and manager, a decoration from the King of Italy, will make its first appearance at the Columbia Theater, Wednesday afternoon, March 2.

"The Skylark," which will receive its premier in Washington, March 4, gives promise of being one of the sensations of recent years.

A Great Cast.

The New York Dramatic Mirror reprints the cast of "Hamlet" which appeared at Lester Wallack's benefit on May 26, 1888. Here it is:

Hamlet.....Edwin Booth
Laertes.....Laurence Barrett
King.....Frank Mayo
Ghost.....Charles Clifton
Polonius.....John Gilbert
First Grave Digger.....W. J. Florence
Second Grave Digger.....Laurence Hamley
Rosencrantz.....Charles Sanford
Marcellus.....Steele Mackaye
Bernardo.....Herbert Kibby
Francisco.....Louis Mason
Priest.....Henry Edwards
First Actor.....Robert Hillard
Second Actor.....Madame Weeks
Queen.....Mrs. D. P. Bowers
Player Queen.....Rose Ogden